

in value to \$1,000 for each year of service that such participant provides to the program. Funds for this benefit shall be included in the budget for the program and reflected in the grant request.

(2)(i) The State shall annually provide to each part-time participant from non-Federal public or private funds a nontransferrable post-service benefit that is equal in value to \$1,000 for each year of service that such participant provides to the program.

(ii) A State may apply for a waiver to reduce the amount of the post-service benefit to an amount that is equal to not less than the average annual tuition and required fees at four year public institutions of higher education within such State. Such waivers will be granted if the Commission determines that such waiver would be equitable due to lack of resources in the State.

(b)(1) The Commission, through the State, shall annually provide to each full-time participant a nontransferrable post-service benefit that is equal in value to \$2,500 for each year of service that such participant provides to the program. Funds for this benefit shall be included in the budget for the program and reflected in the grant request.

(2)(i) The State shall annually provide from non-Federal public or private funds to each full-time participant a nontransferrable post-service benefit that is equal in value to \$2,500 for each year of service that such participant provides to the program.

(ii) A State may apply for a waiver to reduce the amount of the post-service benefit to an amount that is equal to not less than the average annual tuition, required fees, and room and board costs at four year public institutions of higher education within such State. Such waiver will be granted if the Commission determines that such waiver would be equitable due to a lack of resources in the State.

(c) Nothing in this part shall be construed to prevent a State from using funds made available from non-Federal sources to increase the amount of post-service benefits to an amount in excess of that described in this part.

(d) A special senior service participant shall be ineligible to receive post-service benefits under this part.

(e) The Commission will increase the value of post-service benefits provided under this part in each fiscal year based on the increase in the costs associated with attending a four year institution of higher education during that fiscal year. The Commission will determine such increases in costs based on information made available by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics.

§ 2504.11 Uses of post-service benefits.

(a) A post-service benefit for a part-time participant provided under § 2504.10(a) of this part shall only be used for:

(1) Payment of a student loan from Federal or non-Federal sources;

(2) Down-payment or closing costs associated with purchasing a first home; or

(3) Tuition at an institution of higher education on a fulltime basis, or to pay the expenses incurred in the full-time participation in an apprenticeship program approved by the appropriate State agency.

(b) A post-service benefit for a full-time participant provided under § 2504.10(b) of this part shall only be used for:

(1) Payment of a student loan from Federal or non-Federal sources; or

(2) Tuition, room and board, books and fees, and other costs associated with attendance (pursuant to section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 108711)) at an institution of higher education on a full-time basis, or to pay the expenses incurred in the full-time participation in an apprenticeship program approved by the appropriate State agency.

§ 2504.12 Living allowance.

(a)(1) Each participant in a full-time program that receives assistance under this part shall receive a living allowance of not more than 100 percent of the poverty line for a family of two. Program agencies have the flexibility to establish the amount of living allowance in accordance with this part.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (a)(1) of this section, a program agency may

provide participants with additional amounts that are made available from non-Federal sources.

(b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a program in existence on November 16, 1990, to decrease any stipends, salaries, or living allowances provided to participants under such program.

(c) In addition to the living allowances provided under paragraph (a) of this section, grantees are encouraged to provide health insurance to each participant in a full-time national service program who does not otherwise have access to health insurance.

(d)(1) Each full-time special senior service participant shall receive a living allowance equal to the living allowance provided to full-time participants under paragraph (a) of this Section and such other assistance as the Commission considers necessary and appropriate for a special senior service participant to carry out the service obligation of such participant.

(2) Each part-time special senior service participant shall receive a living allowance equal to a share of such allowance offered to a full-time special senior service participant under paragraph (d)(1) of this section, that has been prorated according to the number of hours such part-time participant serves in the program, and such other assistance as the Commission considers necessary and appropriate for a special senior service participant to carry out the service obligation of such participant.

§ 2504.13 Criteria for evaluating applications.

(a) In determining whether to award a grant, the Commission will consider:

(1) The ability of the proposed program to serve as an effective model for a large-scale national service program;

(2) The quality of the application, including the plan for training, recruitment, placement, and data collection;

(3) The extent that the program builds on existing programs; and

(4) The expedience with which the State proposes to make the program operational.

(b) The Commission will also consider:

(1)(i) The quality of the program, based on the program's ability to offer valuable services in the communities where they are needed most and where programs do not exist or where existing volunteer service programs are too limited to meet community needs; to provide productive, meaningful, educational experiences for participants that incorporate service-learning methods; to involve the participants in the design and operation of the program; to involve individuals from diverse backgrounds (including economically disadvantaged youth) who will serve together and explore the root-causes of community problems; and to prepare the participants for future volunteer service leadership.

(ii) The quality of leadership and management, as measured by the qualifications of the principal leaders of the program and plans and processes for recruitment, training, supervision, participant support, evaluation, administration and other key activities.

(2) Innovative aspects of the program, based on the:

(i) Ability of the program to advance knowledge about effective community service in ways that will be broadly applicable beyond the program location; and

(ii) Approach to evaluation and other means of learning from the experience of the program;

(3)(i) Replicability, based on the ability and willingness of the program to assist others in learning from the experience and replicating the approach of the program; and

(4) Sustainability, based on:

(i) Inclusion in a State Comprehensive Plan;

(ii) Significant bipartisan, non-partisan, or other broad-based support for and involvement in the program; and

(iii) Evidence that financial resources will be available to continue the program after the expiration of the grant.

(c) In addition, the Commission shall ensure that programs receiving assistance under this part are geographically diverse and include programs in both urban and rural areas.